

Cooke, Edmund Vance

DRAWER 28

Box 1

71.2009.085.05465

Lincoln Poetry

Poets

Edmund Vance Cooke

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

The Highlander Bugle



Volume XXVII

FEBRUARY, 1949

Number 2

Abraham Lincoln

O UNCOMMON COMMONER! May your name
 Forever lead like a living flame!
 Unschooled Scholar! How did you learn
 The wisdom a lifetime may not earn?
 Unsainted Martyr! Higher than saint!
 You were a man with a man's constraint
 In the world, of the World was your lot;
 With it, for it, the fight you fought,
 And never till time is itself forgot
 And the heart of man is a pulseless clot .
 Shall the blood flow slow when we think
 The thought of LINCOLN!

—Edmund Vance Cooke.

George Washington

O WASHINGTON, thrice glorious name,
 What due rewards can man decree—
 Empires are far below thy aim,
 And scepters have no charms for thee;
 Virtue alone has your regards,
 And she must be your great reward.

—Philip Frenau.

49. **COOKE, EDMUND VANCE.** Author, Poet.
Autograph Manuscript Signed, of his great patri-
otic first World War poem "Back of the Boy".
Folio, 2 pages, N. D. The complete Poem. 13.75.

The refrain to all stanzas

Back of the Boy is Wilson,
Pledge of his high degree!
Back of the Boy is Lincoln,
Lincoln and Grant and Lee!
Back of the Boy is Jackson,
Jackson and Tippecanoe!
Back of each son is Washington,
And the old red, white and blue.

Am. clipper Oct 1942

BEATITUDE

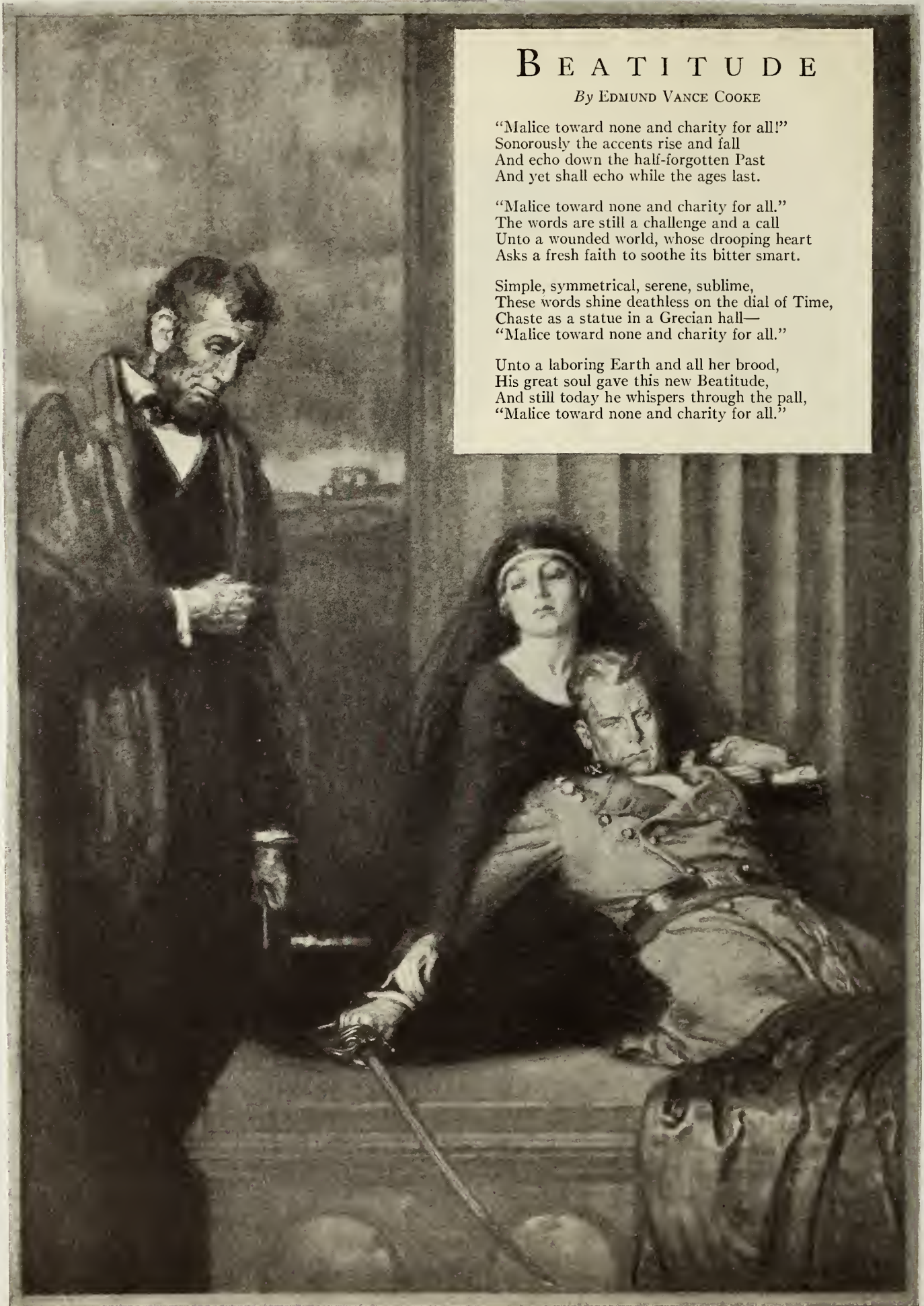
By EDMUND VANCE COOKE

"Malice toward none and charity for all!"
Sonorously the accents rise and fall
And echo down the half-forgotten Past
And yet shall echo while the ages last.

"Malice toward none and charity for all."
The words are still a challenge and a call
Unto a wounded world, whose drooping heart
Asks a fresh faith to soothe its bitter smart.

Simple, symmetrical, serene, sublime,
These words shine deathless on the dial of Time,
Chaste as a statue in a Grecian hall—
"Malice toward none and charity for all."

Unto a laboring Earth and all her brood,
His great soul gave this new Beatitude,
And still today he whispers through the pall,
"Malice toward none and charity for all."



Drawing by William Welsh

Kentuckiana Review
February 7, 1960

POEMS FOR OUR TIME

From: Abby Meguire Roach

THIS LITTLE-KNOWN POEM, unfortunately having to be cut but timely for Lincoln's Birthday this week, makes its point the more pungently for its lack of the grandiloquences usual in such connections, and makes it through our knowledge of what happened and what can and does happen still in our democracy when the right stuff for it is there.

BORN WITHOUT A CHANCE

A squalid village set in wintry mud.
A hub-deep ox-cart slowly groans and creaks.
A horseman hails and halts and shifts his cud,
And speaks:

"Well, did you hear? Tom Lincoln's wife today.
The devil's luck for folk as poor as they.

Poor Tom! Poor Nance!
Poor young-un born without a chance!

"A baby in that God-forsaken den,
That worse than cattle pen . . .
Another squawking, squalling red-faced good-for-naught,
Spilled on this world, Heaven only knows for what . . .
Yet there be those who claim 'equality' for this new brat.

"Oh well, send the women folks to see to Nance.
"Poor little devil born without a chance!"

EDMUND VANCE COOKE



Without A Chance

by
Edmund Vance Cooke

THE TIME. *Napoleonic in Europe, Jeffersonian in America.*
THE SCENE: *An outlying border state, sometimes called "the dark and bloody ground."*
THE EXACT DATE: *February 12, 1809.*

A squalid village set in wintry mud.
A hub-deep oxcart slowly groans and creaks.
A horseman hails and halts. He shifts his cud
And speaks:

"Well, did you hear? Tom Lincoln's wife today.
The devil's luck for folk as poor as they!
Poor Tom! poor Nance!
Poor youngun born without a chance!

"A baby in that Godforsaken den,
That worse than cattle pen!
Well, what are they but cattle? Cattle? Tut!
A critter is beef, hide and tallow, but
Who'd swap one for the critters of that hut?
White trash! small fry!
Whose only instincts are to multiply!
They're good at that,
And, so, today, God wot! another brat!

"Another squawking, squalling, good-for-naught
Spilled on the world, heaven only knows for what.
Better if he were black,
For then he'd have a shirt upon his back,
And something in his belly, as he grows.
More than he's like to have, as I suppose.
Yet there be those
Who claim 'equality' for this new brat,
And that damned democrat
Who squats today where Washington once sat,
He'd have it that this Lincoln cub might be
Of even value in the world with you and me!

"Yes, Jefferson, Tom Jefferson, who but he?
Who even hints that black men should be free.
That featherheaded fool would tell you maybe
A president might lie in this new baby!
In this new squawker born without a rag
To hide himself! Good God, it makes me gag!
This human spawn
Born for the world to wipe its feet upon
A few years hence, but now
More helpless than the litter of a sow,
And—Oh, well!
Send the womenfolks to see to Nance.

"Poor little devil! born without a chance!"



C. S. R. E. V.

"BORN WITHOUT A CHANCE"

THE TIME: Napoleonic in Europe,
Jeffersonian in America.

THE SCENE: An outlying border
state, sometimes called "the
dark and bloody ground."

THE EXACT DATE: February 12, 1809.

A SQUALID Village set in wintry mud.

A hub-deep ox-cart slowly groans and
creaks.

A horseman hails and halts. He shifts his cud
And speaks:

"Well, did you hear? Tom Lincoln's wife;
today.

The devil's luck for folk as poor as they!

Poor Tom! poor Nance!

Poor youngun! born without a chance!

"A baby in that God-forsaken den,
That worse than cattle-pen!

Well, what are they but cattle? Cattle? Tut!

A critter is beef, hide, and tallow, but

Who'd swap one for the critters of that hut?

White trash! small fry!

Whose only instincts are to multiply!

They're good at that

And so, today, God wot! another brat!

"Another squawking, squalling, red-faced good-
for-naught

Spilled on the world, heaven only knows for
what.

Better if he were black,

For then he'd have a shirt upon his back

And something in his belly, as he grows.

More than he's like to have, as I suppose.

Yet there be those

Who claim 'equality' for this new brat,

And that damned democrat

Who squats today where Washington once sat,

He'd have it that this Lincoln cub might be,

Of even value in the world with you and me!

"Yes, Jefferson, Tom Jefferson, who but he?

Who even hints that black men should be free.

That feather-headed fool would tell you maybe,

A president might lie in this new baby!

In this squawker born without a rag

To hide himself! Good God, it makes me gag!

This human spawn

Born for the world to wipe its feet upon

A few years hence, but now

More helpless than the litter of a sow,

And ---oh, well! send the women folks to

Nance.

.....
Poor little devil! born without a chance!"



FROM LINCOLN

I met a man who knew him! even him,
 Whose memory Time may nor dark nor dim.
 He had, known Lincoln's self! It was as though
 He had known Moses and had told me so
 Between two commonplaces. "You the friend
 Of the Immortal? What word did he send
 Adown the years to us, who dare to dwell
 On the same planet where he wrought so well?
 Was there, mayhap, one word for me - for one
 Whose breath, when Lincoln left, had not begun?
 Then spoke his friend;-"Our Lincoln's every breath
 Sent you his message, even as did his death.
 His days were such as these: Men lived and died
 For the Great Faith, with souls all satisfied.
 One day, some youth as yet unborn, shall ask,
 'And were you friend to him-to him, whose task
 Is greater than a Lincoln's?' Then what shall you say?
 It is as much to stand as friend today,
 Friend to the larger faith, the greater good,
 Friend to the higher hopes, half understood,
 Friend to the man whose vision looks ahead,
 Leading men's purer purposes, as Lincoln led!"

Edmund Vance Cooke

© 1919 - N.E.A.

2-12-19

LINCOLN



Bulwark and barbican, grim and tall,
Keep and turret and moated wall,
Portico, peristyle, stately hall,
Palaces, castles, courts and all;
Lofly minaret, lordly dome,
Humble yourselves at the childhood home
Of Lincoln.

Made of a few sticks, clumsily cut;
No window to open, no door to shut;
So wretched, indeed, that the name of hut
Were gilded praise of its poverty; but—
By the kernel alone we must judge the nut
Who could have dreamed in that early hour
That out of such muck would have sprung the flower—
A Lincoln!



Reactionaries! who strive, today,
To hold that men are of differing clay;
Oligarchs! plutocrats! ye who say
The fathers were wrong, and yea or nay
May answer a People's Rights, today,
That some are to rule and some obey,
One plain word shall command your ehamer;
Into your faces I fling the name
Of Lincoln.



Whence did he come? From the rearmost rank
Of the humblest file. Was it some mad prank
Of God that the mountains were bare and blank
And the strong tree grew on the lowliest bank?
Not so! 'Tis the Law. The seed blows wide
And the flower may bloom as the garden's pride,
Or spring from the ditch. Nor time, nor place,
Condition nor caste, nor clime nor race
Can limit manhood. The proof is the case
Of Lincoln.



How was he trained—this untaught sage,
With nothing but want for his heritage?
Set to work at the tender age
Which should have been conning a primer page—
His whole youth spent for a pitiful wage
As axman, farmer, boatman, clerk;
Learned alone in the school of work
Was Lincoln.



What was his power? Not kingly caste,
Nor jingle of gold howsoever amassed;
Not Napoleon's force with the world aghast;
Not Talleyrand's cunning, now loose, now fast;
Not weak persuasion or fierce duress,
But strong with the Virtue of Homeliness
Was Lincoln.



Homely in feature. An old style room,
With its tall, quaint clock and its old, quaint loom,
Has very much of his home-made air.
Plain, but a plainness made to wear.
Homely in character. Void of pretense;
Homely in homeliest common sense.
Homely in honesty. Homespun stuff
For every weather, mild or rough.
Homely in humor, which bubbled up
Like a forest spring in its earthen cup.
Homely in justice. He knew the law,
But often more than the letter he saw;
And, sheathing the sword to its harmless hilt,
Wrote "Pardon" over the blot of guilt.
Homely in patience. His door stood wide,
And carping and cavil from every side
Dinned in his ears, but he went his way
And did the strongest that in him lay.
Homely in modesty. Never a claim
Of credit he made, and he shirked no blame;
Yet firm in his place as the hemisphere
When principle said to him, "Stand thou here!"
Homely in tenderness. Motherhood's breast,
Where the new babe cuddles its head to rest,
Is not more gentle than was his heart;
Yet brave as a Bayard in every part
Was Lincoln.



O, Uncommon Commoner! may your name
Forever lead like a living flame!
Unschool'd Scholar! how did you learn
The wisdom a lifetime cannot earn?
Unsaluted Martyr! higher than saint!
You were a MAN with a man's constraint,
In the world, of the world, was your lot;
With it and for it the fight you fought,
And never till Time is itself forgot
And the heart of man is a pulseless clot,
Shall the blood flow aflow when we think the thought
Of Lincoln.

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.



LINCOLN

By Edmund Vance Cook

Bulwark and barbican, grim and tall,
Keep and turret and moated wall
Portico, peristyle, stately hall,
Palaces, castles, courts, and all;
Lofty minaret, lordly dome,
Humble yourselves at the childhood
home.

Of Lincoln

Made of a few sticks, clumsily cut;
No window to open, no door to shut;
So wretched, indeed, that the name of
hut
Were gilded praise of its poverty;
but—
By the kernel alone we must judge the
nut.
Who could have dreamed in that early
hour
That out of such muck would have
sprung the flower—
A Lincoln!

Reactionaries! who strive, to-day,
To hold that men are of different clay;
Oligarchs! plutocrats! ye who say
The fathers were wrong, and yea or
nay
May answer a People's Rights, to-day,
That some are to rule and some obey,
One plain word shall command your
shame;
Into your faces I fling the name
Of Lincoln

Whence did he come? From the rear-
most rank
Of the humblest file. Was it some mad
prank
Of God that the mountains were bare
and blank
And the strong tree grew on the low-
liest bank?
Not so! 'Tis the Law. The seed blows
wide
And the flower may blossom as the
garden's pride,
Or spring from the ditch. Nor time,
nor place,
Conditions nor caste, nor clime nor
race
Can limit manhood. The proof is the
case
Of Lincoln

How was he trained—this untaught
sage,
With nothing but want for his her-
itage?
Set to work at the tender age
Which should have been conning a
primer page—
His whole youth spent for a pitiful
wage
As axman, farmer, boatman, clerk;
Learned alone in the school of work
Was Lincoln.

What was his power? Not kingly
caste,
Nor jingle of gold howsoever amassed;
Not Napoleon's force with the world
aghast;
Not Tallyrand's cunning, now loose,
now fast;
Not weak persuasion or fierce duress,
But strong with the Virtue of Home-
liness
Was Lincoln.

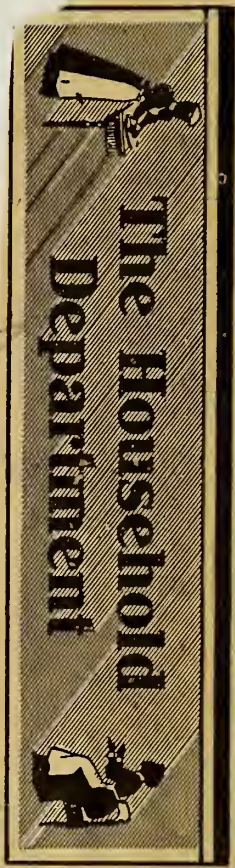
Homely in feature. An old style room,
With its tall, quaint clock and its old,
quaint loom,
Has very much of his home-made air.
Plain, but a plainness made to wear.
Homely in character. Void of pre-
tense;

Homely in homeliest common sense.
Homely in honesty. Homespun stuff
For every weather, mild or rough.
Homely in humor, which bubbled up
Like a forest spring in its earthen cup.
Homely in justice. He knew the law,
But often more than the letter he saw;
And, sheathing the sword to its harm-
less hilt,

Wrote "Pardon" over the blot of guilt.
Homely in patience. His door stood
wide,
And carping and cavil from every side
Dinned in his ears, but he went his
way
And did the strongest that in him lay.

Homely in modesty. Never a claim
Of credit he made, and he shirked no
blame;
Yet firm in his place as the hemis-
phere
When principle said to him, "Stand
thou here!"
Homely in tenderness. Motherhood's
breast,
Where the new babe cuddles its head
to rest,
Is not more gentle than was his heart;
Yet brave as a Bayard in every part
Was Lincoln.

O, Uncommon Commoner! may your
name
Forever lead like a living flame!
Unschool'd Scholar! how did you
learn
The wisdom a lifetime cannot earn?
Unsainted Martyr! higher than saint!
You were a Man with man's constraint.
In the world, of the world, was your
lot;
With it and for it the fight you fought,
And never till Time is itself forgot
And the heart of man is a pulseless
clot,
Shall the slow blood flow when we
think the thought
Of Lincoln





LINCOLN

*The Great American
Whose Birthday Is
Celebrated Today*

WE of the South unite with our brethren of the North in honoring the birthday of Lincoln—the Great American.

On February 12, in a lowly love-filled home in the year 1809, Lincoln first saw the light of day. Throughout the career of this distinguished patriot, we learn of traits of character that raise the man into the ranks of the immortals—of whom else could such words be written:

O, Uncommon Commoner! may your name
Forever lead like a living flame!
Unschool'd scholar! how did you learn
The wisdom a lifetime may not earn?
Unsainted martyr! higher than saint!
You were a man with a man's constraint.
In the world, of the world was your lot;
With it and for it the fight you fought,
And never till Time is itself forgot
And the heart of man is a pulseless clot
Shall the blood flow slow, when we think the
thought

Of Lincoln!

—Edmund Vance Cooke

New Orleans

Times Picayune - Feb. 12 - 1927

Where Lincoln Stood

If Lincoln stood where Wilson stands
And stretching out his gnarled hands
He asked us to uphold the State,
Is there a man among us all
Who would not hasten to the call
And pledge his faith and fate?

Well, Wilson stands where Lincoln stood,
His aim is just, his cause is good,
And who may stand if he shall fall?
Grant him our full-powered strength to win;
Stand fast! stand fast! through thick and thin,
For him; for us! for ALL!

—EDMUND VANCE COOKE.
